

COUNTRY Austria

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SUBJECT Austrian Communist Saboteurs and
Paramilitary Groups

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SUPPLEMENT TO
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1. On 26 April 1948, a conference was held in the rooms of the Communist Office for Popular Education, Vienna IX, Wasagasse 10, concerning the fusion of Communist organizations. The following persons took part in the discussion:

Franz Honner, Deputy Chairman of the Austrian Communist Party and director of illegal Communist defense organizations in Austria.

Ing. Ernst Wegerer, a director of the Werkschutz in the Soviet Zone of
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Dr. Steiner [REDACTED] Possibly Herbert Steiner of the Free Austrian Youth (FÖJ).)

Josef Kahn

Franz Marek

Walter Probst

Dr. Jedlicka

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Else Schorr [REDACTED] Possibly Magda Schorr-Dahlen.)

The conference was intended to lead to a fusion of Communist defense organizations in Austria. It was agreed that a committee should be formed from the Werkschutz, the Black Brigade, the Communist sport association, and the FÖJ, for the purpose of distributing uniform orders to all these groups. The individual organizations, however, were to retain their organic independence.

2. In Styria, activities of CP sabotage groups are directed by a central office in Fohnsdorf. The chief of this headquarters is Ernst Maier, who lives in Fohnsdorf, Lorenzgasse 13. Maier is 27 years old. He spent five years in a concentration camp. In February 1948 he attended a Party school in Vienna and, possibly about the same time, a sabotage course in Zistersdorf. His deputy is Fritz Drobisch, 30 years old. In the Fohnsdorf mines, Fritz Wallant also has a leading role in the sabotage organization; he lives in Fohnsdorf and is a member of the provincial directorate of the CP in Styria.

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3. Sabotage groups subordinate to the Fohnsdorf headquarters have been recognized in the following places in Styria: Graz, Leibnitz, Voitsberg, Koeflach, Judenburg, Knittelfeld, Leoben, Donawitz, Kapfenberg, and Muerzzuschlag. These 25X1A6a sabotage groups are organized according to a system of ten-man units. Present strength is 2500; 489 of these men are assigned to the Werkschutz. [REDACTED] Comment: This indicates that there are 2500 potential Communist saboteurs in Styria. The term Werkschutz, however, is usually used to designate the organized corps of factory guards at Soviet-controlled plants in the Soviet Zone of Austria. It is therefore unlikely that 489 Werkschutz members are active in Styria. The above statement may mean that 489 Communists from Styria have joined Werkschutz units in the Soviet Zone of Austria. It is also possible that the figure of 2500 saboteurs is meant to include all saboteurs in Austria.)
4. Organization of Communist sabotage groups in Upper Austria is continuing. From 17 to 22 June 1948, a representative of the Central Committee of the CP was in Linz in order to discuss the developments of sabotage groups with Communist leaders in Upper Austria. He allegedly stated that, for the time being, sabotage groups should engage in recruitment and training only. Sabotage is not to begin until after the withdrawal of the occupation forces.
5. From 5 to 7 June 1948, a course was given in Krems, Lower Austria, for directors of the secret FÖJ sabotage organization in the Muehlviertel. Persons taking part in the course were Walther Brandecker, director of FÖJ sabotage organization in the Muehlviertel and editor of the newspaper, Neue Zeit in Urfaehr; Herbert Muehleiter from Gallingkirchen; Karl Zagmeister from Rohrach; and Rudolf Brandtner from Freistadt. Instructors were three Austrians and a Soviet major named Shervenko. The course in Krems was a repetition of instruction given at the Zistersdorf sabotage school, which Muehleiter and Zagmeister had already attended.
6. The following subjects were taught at Krems: technique of explosives; signalling, including sketchy instruction in the operation of shortwave sets; exercises with the Panzerfaust (German bazooka-type weapon); political instruction. Students were told that their future assignments would involve participation in the establishment of a "people's democratic army" and cooperation with the Soviet Army. Students were warned repeatedly to observe complete secrecy.

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